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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COLOMBO EAC MEETING 04/09/2008

REF: COLOMBO 352

Classified By: Michael V. Perkins, Regional Security Officer,
reasons 1.4 (b, c)

11. (SBU) Summary: AmEmbassy Colombo convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on April 9, 2008. The EAC discussed post's security posture in light of a recent assassination of a government minister and the upcoming Sinhala/Tamil New Year celebrations. The EAC agreed that current security measures and recommendations were appropriate to the threat. The EAC recommended that the RSO review security measures for future Mission-sponsored events which high-profile Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) officials are expected to attend. End summary.

12. (SBU) On April 9, 2008, AmEmbassy Colombo convened an EAC meeting. Present for the meeting were the Ambassador, DCM, RSO, DHS, IBB, Treasury, ECON, IMO, MGT, POL, ODC, CONS, RAO, USAID, MSG and PAO. The agenda items for the meeting were:

-- The suicide bombing on April 6 in which Minister for Highways (and Chief Government Whip in Parliament) Jeyaraj Fernandopulle and 13 others were killed (reftel) and the implications of this event for post's security posture. The incident occurred in Weliweriya, 25 kilometers northeast of Colombo.

-- The possibility of more attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during the Sinhala/Tamil New Year holiday weekend (April 11 - 14)

-- Security for Mission-sponsored events that high-profile GSL officials attend

13. (SBU) The EAC noted that the April 6 suicide bombing that killed Minister Fernandopulle was probably unrelated to any LTTE attempt to disrupt the upcoming Sinhala/Tamil New Year holiday. Fernandopulle, an ethnic Tamil, had long been a target of the LTTE. He was an outspoken critic of the terrorist organization and a high-ranking GSL official who was close to the President. The RSO commented that the event (a ceremonial opening of a marathon race) during which Fernandopulle died had received much publicity in the days leading up to April 6. Sources had informed the RSO that the Minister reduced his normal security detail, preferring a low profile for what Fernandopulle felt was a low key event. Police admitted that they had not conducted any security checks of the general public. Thus, Fernandopulle had been a soft target of opportunity that LTTE easily exploited. The EAC concurred that this event had few, if any, implications for post's security posture.

14. (S/NF) The EAC discussed information from other embassies and GSL contacts concerning the possibility of LTTE attacks during the long Sinhala/Tamil New Year holiday weekend. The EAC took note of the fact that much of the information was actually speculation. The EAC also considered the fact that, while rumors of possible LTTE attacks circulated before the same holiday last year, no incidents occurred. On the other hand, RAO informed the EAC that some GSL security services had more specific information concerning LTTE leadership,s desire to disrupt the holiday. This information included the possibility that LTTE suicide cadres were already in place in the South (including Colombo and Kandy). However, as GSL officials and installations would likely continue to be LTTE,s targets, the EAC determined that post,s current security posture was commensurate with the actual threat. The committee reviewed current advice to Embassy staff and the larger Amciti community) to avoid large crowds and public gatherings; to particularly avoid political rallies, military bases, and government and military vehicle convoys; and to avoid travel on trains and public buses. The EAC decided that this advice was appropriate to the threat level and recommended no revisions to the Travel Warning.

15. (SBU) USAID noted that in the coming months it had several openings that GSL officials, including, in one case, President Rajapaksa, might attend. The EAC concurred that events which President Rajapaksa attends would most likely have an extremely heavy security presence and would therefore be relatively safe. The EAC recommended to USAID that it consider not inviting high-profile GSL officials in cases where local government officials would suffice for protocol purposes. The EAC further recommended that the RSO should thoroughly examine the security plans for USAID project openings, particularly if high-level GSL dignitaries planned to attend.

16. (U) Post will continue to monitor events and will report further developments, if any, septel. POC for this message is RSO Michael V. Perkins, who may be contacted at 94.11.249.8885, 94.11.249.8888 (MSG Post 1 after regular business hours), or via the classified and unclassified email systems.

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